

Integral Faith

"Homily helps and liturgy resources highlighting care for our common home."



Catholic Climate Covenant™
Care for Creation. Care for the Poor.

Homily Helps and Petitions for the 5th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Cycle A (February 5, 2023)

Homily Helps

† Scripture Passages to Note:

Isaiah 58: If you remove from your midst oppression, false accusation and malicious speech; if you bestow your bread on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted; then light shall rise for you in the darkness, and the gloom shall become for you like midday.

1 Corinthians 2: My message and my proclamation were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of Spirit and power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

Matthew 5: You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others.

† Comments for the Day:

In today's passage from the prophet Isaiah, God calls the people of Israel to care for the poor and most vulnerable. Fulfilling that divine mandate is also their collective path to holiness and the surest guarantee of Israel's security. How might this come about? To make Israel shine like a bright light and ensure the security of its homeland, the people are called to recognize their interdependence on one another. They need to enter into a constructive dialogue to search for workable solutions to their problems.

God continues to call our communities and our own nation to seek holiness and genuine security by caring for the poor and for God's creation. This search demands that we accept our global interdependence. Are we willing to enter into dialogue to solve the common problems we face? While we must be concerned with our own problems, we must also be aware of the plight of our fellow citizens, and of people across the globe. As in the time of Isaiah, the wellbeing of the poor and most vulnerable must be an essential part of our thinking. To let our light shine and to reap the benefits of prosperity, our actions must be inspired and informed by God's vision and values, not by the vision and values of the dominant culture. We have a moral debt to the poor and an obligation to future generations, those most impacted by environmental degradation like climate change.

In his letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul juxtaposes human wisdom with divine wisdom. In First Century Palestine, human wisdom was informed by the imperial Roman culture in which mercy, compassion and solidarity were viewed as character weaknesses. What kind of power do we

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draw upon? In what ways might the gospel be challenging us? We need to make the connection between faith and such issues as nuclear disarmament, economic justice, equitable tax policies, environmental protection, and renewable energy. These are not just social, scientific, or political issues for the experts to decide; they are issues that we as members of the community must weigh in on, bringing to bear the guidance of our faith and the wisdom of our tradition.

In Matthew's gospel, Jesus calls us to be a light for the world, putting our light on a lamp stand, not under a bushel basket. What might this mean at a time when so many one-sided, shallow solutions and empty slogans are being peddled as remedies to our social ills? Our Church has the opportunity and the obligation to make a transformative contribution in this area. The wisdom of papal encyclicals like *Laudato Si'* must reach the people in the pews. How might we put this light on its proper lamp stand?

All of today's readings provide a great opportunity to do precisely that, allowing the assembled community to hear our rich wisdom, and to be challenged to find ways to live it faithfully and courageously.

† **Passages from *Laudato Si'* to Note:**

Economic interests easily end up trumping the common good and manipulating information so that their own plans will not be affected...the most one can expect is superficial rhetoric, sporadic acts of philanthropy and perfunctory expressions of concern for the environment, whereas any genuine attempt by groups within society to introduce change is viewed as a nuisance based on romantic illusions or an obstacle to be circumvented. (54)

There has been a growing conviction that our planet is a homeland and that humanity is one people living in a common home.... [A global] consensus could lead, for example, to planning a sustainable and diversified agriculture, developing renewable and less polluting forms of energy, encouraging a more efficient use of energy, promoting a better management of marine and forest resources, and ensuring universal access to drinking water. (164)

The gravity of the ecological crisis demands that we all look to the common good, embarking on a path of dialogue which demands patience, self-discipline and generosity, always keeping in mind that "realities are greater than ideas." (201)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: That, like our all-good and all-merciful God, we will reach out to the poor and most vulnerable, who are disproportionately impacted by climate change, let us pray to the Lord...

Option 2: That we may be salt of the earth and light of the world by promoting efforts to address climate justice, let us pray to the Lord....

Further Resources

Feedback: info@catholicclimatecovenant.org

Webpage: www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/resource/english-homily-help